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The Political Economy of the Twentieth Century

Samir Amin

School Violence: A Question of Place

Grace Lee Boggs

The Threat of Fascism in Austria

Rick Kuhn

Also: Alienation in American Society by Fritz Pappenheim; *The Malthus Factor* reviewed by Sarah Sexton

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

On keeping the MR *flag flying: Between us there are 177 years of life. The issue of continuity has plagued us for some time and we have from time to time explored and experimented with ways of maintaining the unique tradition of* MR *as an independent, nonsectarian advocate for and educator on socialism and Marxism. With that in mind, we have asked John B. Foster and Robert W. McChesney to assume the responsibility of being Acting Editors. We are pleased that they have agreed. In addition to their direct editorial responsibilities, John and Bob will participate in the development of a more permanent editorial board as well as a battery of contributing editors, not only academics but also labor and social movement activists. We expect to continue to guide the magazine as long as possible.*

Longtime MR *readers are surely aware that Foster and McChesney were not picked from a hat. They are younger academics who grew up with the magazine and with MR Press books. Over the years they became intimately involved with our work. John has been a Director of the Monthly Review Foundation for many years and Bob has recently joined the Board.*

John Bellamy Foster has written important and innovative articles and books in political economy that are squarely in the tradition established by Baran and Sweezy, most notably in Monopoly Capital, *and has established a reputation as a major environmental sociologist. His publications include* The Vulnerable Planet: A Short Economic History of the Environment; The Faltering Economy: The Problem of Accumulation Under Monopoly Capitalism; The Theory of Monopoly Capitalism: An Elaboration of Marxian Political Economy; *as well as the just-published* Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature.

Robert W. McChesney has been a frequent contributor to MR *and was the lead editor of a special issue of* MR *(later expanded into the book,* Capitalism and the Information Age). *He is the author of* Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935; Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy; Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times; *and co-author of* The Global Media: The New Missionaries of

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The Political Economy of the Twentieth Century

by Samir Amin

The Belle Époque

The twentieth century came to a close in an atmosphere astonishingly reminiscent of that which had presided over its birth—the "belle époque" (and it *was* beautiful, at least for capital). The bourgeois choir of the European powers, the United States, and Japan (which I will call here "the triad" and which, by 1910, constituted a distinct group) were singing hymns to the glory of their definitive triumph. The working classes of the center were no longer the "dangerous classes" they had been during the nineteenth century and the other peoples of the world were called upon to accept the "civilizing mission" of the West.

The belle époque crowned a century of radical global transformations, marked by the emergence of the first industrial revolution and the formation of the modern bourgeois nation-state. The process spread from the northwestern quarter of Europe and conquered the rest of the continent, the United States, and Japan. The old peripheries of the mercantilist age (Latin America and the British and Dutch East Indies) were excluded from the dual revolution, while the old states of Asia (China, the Ottoman sultanate, and Persia) were being integrated as periph-

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eries within the new globalization. The triumph of the centers of globalized capital asserted itself in a demographic explosion, which swelled the European population from 23 percent of the world's total in 1800 to 36 percent in 1900. At the same time, the concentration of industrial wealth in the triad created a polarization of wealth on a scale humanity had not witnessed during the entirety of its history. On the eve of the industrial revolution, the disproportion in the social productivity of work between the most productive fifth of humanity and the remainder had never exceeded a ratio of two to one. By 1900, this ratio was twenty to one.

The globalization celebrated in 1900, even then called "the end of history," was nevertheless a recent fact, emerging during the second half of the nineteenth century. The opening of China and of the Ottoman Empire in 1840, the repression of the Sepoys in India in 1857, and the division of Africa that started in 1885 marked successive steps in the process. Globalization, far from accelerating the process of capital accumulation (a distinct process to which it cannot be reduced), in fact brought on a structural crisis between 1873 and 1896; almost exactly a century later, it did so again. The first crisis, however, was accompanied by a new industrial revolution (electricity, petroleum, automobiles, the airplane), which was expected to transform the human species; much the same is said today about electronics. In parallel, the first industrial and financial oligopolies were created—the transnational corporations (TNCs) of the time. Financial globalization seemed to be establishing itself in a stable fashion (and being thought of as eternal, a familiar contemporary belief) in the form of the gold-sterling standard. There was even talk of the internationalization of the transactions made possible by the new stock exchanges, with as much enthusiasm as accompanies talk of financial globalization today. Jules Verne was sending his hero (English, of course) around the world in eighty days—for him, the "global village" was already a reality.

The political economy of the nineteenth century was dominated by the figures of the great classics—Adam Smith, Ricardo, then Marx and his devastating critique. The triumph of *fin-de-*

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siécle globalization brought to the foreground a new "liberal" generation, driven by the desire to prove that capitalism was "unsurpassable" because it expressed the demands of an eternal, transhistorical rationality. Walras, a central figure in this new generation (whose discovery by contemporary economists is no coincidence), did everything he could to prove that markets were self-regulating. He had as little success proving it then as neoclassical economists have today.

The ideology of triumphant liberalism reduced society to a mere multiplication of individuals. Then, following this reduction, it was asserted that the equilibrium produced by the market both constitutes the social optimum and guarantees stability and democracy. Everything was in place to substitute a theory of imaginary capitalism for an analysis of the contradictions in real capitalism. The vulgar version of this economistic social thought would find its expression in the manuals of the Briton Alfred Marshall, the bibles of economics at the time.

The promises of globalized liberalism, as they were then vaunted, seemed to be coming true for a while during the belle époque. After 1896, growth started again on the new bases of the second industrial revolution, oligopolies, and financial globalization. This "emergence from the crisis" sufficed not only to convince organic ideologues of capitalism—the new economists—but also to shake the bewildered workers' movement. Socialist parties began to slide from their reformist positions to more modest ambitions: to be simple associates in managing the system. The shift was very similar to that found today in the discourse of Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder. The modernist elites of the periphery also believed that nothing could be imagined outside the dominant logic of capitalism.

The triumph of the belle époque lasted less than two decades. A few dinosaurs, still young at the time (Lenin, for instance!), predicted its downfall but no one heard them. Liberalism, or the attempt to put into practice the individualist "free market" utopia—what is, in fact, the unilateral domination of capital—could not reduce the intensity of the contradictions of every sort that the system carried within itself. On the contrary, it sharpened

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them. Behind the cheerful hymns sung by the workers' parties and trade unions as they mobilized for the cause of capitalist-utopian nonsense, one could hear the muted rumble of a fragmented social movement, confused, always on the verge of exploding, and crystallizing around the invention of new alternatives. A few Bolshevik intellectuals used their gift for sarcasm with regard to the narcotized discourse of the "rentier political economy," as they described the "pensée unique" of the time—the hegemonic rules of "free market" thought. Liberal globalization could only engender the system's militarization in relations among the imperialist powers of the era, could only bring about a war which, on its cold and warm forms, lasted for just over thirty years—from 1914 to 1945. Behind the apparent calm of the belle époque it was possible to discern the rise of social struggles and violent domestic and international conflicts. In China, the first generation of critics of the bourgeois modernization project were clearing a path; their critique—still in its babbling stage in India, the Ottoman and Arab world, and Latin America—would finally conquer the three continents and dominate three-quarters of the twentieth century.

The Thirty Years' War (1914–1945)

Between 1914 and 1945, the stage was held simultaneously by the thirty years' war between the United States and Germany, over who would inherit Britain's defunct hegemony, and by the attempts to contest, contain, and control—by any available means—the alternative hegemony described as the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union.

In the capitalist centers, both victors and vanquished in the war of 1914–1918 attempted persistently—against all the odds—to restore the utopia of globalized liberalism. We therefore witness a return to the gold standard; a colonial order maintained through violence; and economic management, regulated during the war years, once again liberalized. The results seemed positive for a brief time, and the 1920s saw renewed growth, pulled by the dynamism of the new mass automotive economy in the United States and the establishment of new forms of assembly

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line labor (parodied so brilliantly by Charlie Chaplin in "Modern Times"). But these developments would find ready ground for generalization, even within the core capitalist countries, only after the Second World War. The 1920s restoration was fragile and, as early as 1929, the financial underpinnings—the most globalized segment of the system—collapsed. The following decade, leading up to the war, was a nightmare. The great powers reacted to recession as they would again in the 1980s and 1990s, with systematically deflationist policies that served only to aggravate the crisis, creating a downward spiral characterized by massive unemployment—all the more tragic for its victims because the safety nets invented by the welfare state did not yet exist. Liberal globalization could not withstand the crisis; the monetary system based on gold was abandoned. The imperialist powers regrouped in the framework of colonial empires and protected zones of influence—the sources of the conflict that would lead to the Second World War.

Western societies reacted differently to the catastrophe. Some sank into fascism, choosing war as a means of reshuffling the deck on a global scale (Germany, Italy, Japan). The United States and France were the exceptions and, through Roosevelt's New Deal and the Front Populaire in France, launched another option: that of market management ("regulation") through active state intervention, backed by the working classes. These formulas remained timid and tentative in practice, however, and were expressed fully only after 1945.

In the peripheries, the collapse of the belle époque myths triggered an anti-imperialist radicalization. Some countries in Latin America, taking advantage of their independence, invented populist nationalism in a variety of forms: in Mexico, during the peasant revolution of the 1910s and 1920s; in Argentina, during Perónism in the 1940s. In the East, Turkish Kemalism was their counterpart. Following the 1911 revolution, China was torn by a long civil war between bourgeois modernists—the Kuo Min Tang—and communists. Elsewhere, the yoke of colonial rule imposed a delay several decades long on the crystallization of similar national-populist projects.

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Isolated, the Soviet Union sought to invent a new trajectory. During the 1920s , it had hoped in vain that the revolution would become global. Forced to fall back on its own forces, it followed Stalin into a series of Five-Year Plans meant to allow it to make up for lost time. Lenin had already defined this course as "Soviet power plus electrification." The reference here is to the new industrial revolution—electricity, not coal and steel. But "electrification" (in fact, mainly coal and steel) would gain the upper hand over the power of the Soviets, emptied of meaning.

This centrally planned accumulation was, of course, managed by a despotic state, regardless of the social populism that characterized its policies. But then, neither German unity nor Japanese modernization had been the work of democrats. The Soviet system was efficient as long as the goals remained simple: to accelerate extensive accumulation (the country's industrialization) and to build up a military force that would be the first one capable of facing the challenge of the capitalist adversary, by beating Nazi Germany and then ending the American monopoly on atomic weapons and ballistic missiles during the 1960s.

After the War: from High Growth (1945–1970) to Crisis (1970–present)

The Second World War inaugurated a new phase in the world system. The takeoff of the postwar period (1945–1975) was based on the three social projects of the age, projects that stabilized and complemented each other. These three social projects were: a) in the West, the welfare state project of national social democracy, based on the efficiency of productive interdependent national systems; b) the "Bandung project" of bourgeois national construction on the system's periphery (development ideology); and c) the Soviet-style project of "capitalism without capitalists," existing in relative autonomy from the dominant world system. The double defeat of fascism and old colonialism had indeed created a conjuncture that allowed the popular classes, victims of capitalist accumulation, to impose variously limited or contested but stable forms of capital regulation and formation, to which capital itself was forced to adjust, and which were at the

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roots of this period of high growth and accelerated accumulation.

The crisis that followed (which started between 1968 and 1975) is one of the erosion, then the collapse, of the systems on which the previous takeoff had rested. This period, which has not yet come to a close, is therefore not that of the establishment of a new world order, as is too often claimed. Rather, this period is characterized by chaos that has not been overcome—far from it. The policies implemented under these conditions do not constitute a positive strategy of capital expansion but simply seek to manage the crisis of capital. They have not succeeded because the "spontaneous" project produced by the unmediated, active domination of capital, in the absence of any framework imposed by social forces through coherent and efficient reaction, is still a utopia: that of world management through what is referred to as "the market"—that is, the short-term interests of capital's dominant forces.

In modern history, phases of reproduction based on stable accumulation systems are succeeded by periods of chaos. In the first of these phases, as in the postwar takeoff, the succession of events gives the impression of a certain monotony, because the social and international relations that make up its architecture are stabilized. These relations are therefore reproduced through the functioning of the dynamics of the system. In these phases—and to the complete confusion of all "methodological individualists"—active, defined, and precise sociohistorical subjects are clearly visible (active social classes, states, political parties, and dominant social organizations). Their practices appear to form a clear pattern and their reactions are predictable in most circumstances; the ideologies that motivate them benefit from a seemingly uncontested legitimacy. At these moments, conjunctures may change, but the structures remain stable. Prediction is then possible, even easy. The danger arises when we extrapolate too much from these predictions, as if the structures in question were eternal and marked "the end of history." Analysis of the contradictions that riddle these structures is then replaced by what the postmodernists rightly call "grand narratives," "the laws

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of history." The subjects of history disappear, making room for supposedly objective structural logics.

But the contradictions of which we are speaking do their work quietly, and one day the "stable" structures collapse. History then enters a phase that may be described later as transitional, but which is lived as a transition toward the unknown, during which new historical subjects crystallize slowly. These subjects inaugurate new practices, proceeding by trial and error, and legitimize them through new ideological discourses, often confused at the outset. Only when the processes of qualitative change have matured sufficiently do new social relations appear, defining post-transitional systems that are capable of sustained self-reproduction.

The postwar takeoff allowed for massive economic, political, and social transformations in all regions of the world. These transformations were the product of social regulations imposed on capital by the working and popular classes. They were not the product (and here liberal ideology is demonstrably false) of a logic of market expansion. But these transformations were so great that, despite the disintegrating process to which we are currently subject, they have defined a new framework for the challenges that confront the world's peoples now, on the threshold of the twenty-first century. For a long time—from the industrial revolution at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the 1930s (in the Soviet Union) or the 1950s (in the third world)—the contrast between the center and the peripheries of the modern world system was almost identical to the opposition between industrialized and non-industrialized countries. The rebellions in the peripheries—and in this respect the socialist revolutions in Russia and China and national liberation movements were alike—revised this schema by engaging their societies in the modernization process. Industrialized peripheries appeared; the old polarization was revised. But then a new form of polarization came into clear view. Gradually, the axis around which the world capitalist system was reorganizing itself, and which would define the future forms of polarization, constituted itself on the basis of the "five new monopolies" that benefitted the countries of the dominant triad: the control of technology;

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global financial flows (through the banks, insurance cartels, and pension funds of the center); access to the planet's natural resources; media and communications; and weapons of mass destruction.

Taken together, these five monopolies define the framework within which the law of globalized value expresses itself. The law of value is hardly the expression of a "pure" economic rationality that can be detached from its social and political frame; rather, it is the condensed expression of the totality of these circumstances. It is these circumstances—rather than a calculus of "rational," mythical individual choices made by the market—that cancel out the extent of industrialization of the peripheries, devalue the productive work incorporated in these products, and overvalue the supposed added value attached to the activities through which the new monopolies operate, to the benefit of the centers. They therefore produce a new hierarchy in the distribution of income on a world scale, more unequal than ever, while making subalterns of the peripheries' industries. Polarization finds its new basis here, a basis which will dictate its future form.

The industrialization that social forces, energized by the victories of national liberation, imposed on dominant capital produced unequal results. Today, we can differentiate the frontline peripheries, which have been capable of building productive national systems with potentially competitive industries within the framework of globalized capitalism, and the marginalized peripheries, which have not been as successful. The criteria that separates the active peripheries from the marginalized is not only seen in the presence of potentially competitive industries: it is also political.

The political authorities in the active peripheries—and, behind them, all of society (including the contradictions within society itself)—have a project and a strategy for its implementation. This is clearly the case for China, Korea, and to a lesser degree, for certain countries in Southeast Asia, India, and some countries in Latin America. These national projects are confronted with globally dominant imperialism; the outcome of this confrontation will contribute to the shape of tomorrow's world.

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On the other hand, the marginalized peripheries have neither a project (even when rhetoric like that of political Islam claims the opposite) nor their own strategy. In this case, imperialist circles "think for them" and take the initiative alone in elaborating "projects" concerning these regions (like the European Community's African associations, the "Middle Eastern" project of the United States and Israel, or Europe's vague Mediterranean schemes). No local forces offer any opposition; these countries are therefore the passive subjects of globalization.

This brief overview of the political economy of the transformation of the global capitalist system in the twentieth century must include a reminder about the stunning demographic revolution that has taken place on the periphery. The proportion of the global population formed by the populations of Asia (excluding Japan and the USSR), Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean was 68 percent in 1900; it is 81 percent today.

The third partner in the postwar world system, comprised of the countries where "actually existing socialism" prevailed, has left the historical scene. The very existence of the Soviet system, with its successes in extensive industrialization and military accomplishments, was one of the principal motors of all the grand transformations of the twentieth century. Without the "danger" that the communist model represented, Western social democracy would never have been able to impose the welfare state. The existence of the Soviet system, and the coexistence it imposed on the United States, reinforced the margin of autonomy available to the bourgeoisie of the South.

The Soviet system, however, did not manage to pass to a new stage of intensive accumulation; it therefore missed out on the new (computer-driven) industrial revolution with which the twentieth century ended. The reasons for this failure are complex; still, this failure forces us to place at the center of our analysis the antidemocratic drift of Soviet power, which was ultimately unable to internalize the fundamental urgency of progress toward socialism demanded by the conditions that confronted it. I refer here to progress toward socialism as represented by the intensification of exactly that democratization of

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economy and society that would be capable of transcending the conditions defined and limited by the framework of historical capitalism. Socialism will be democratic or it cannot exist: this is the lesson of this first experience of the break with capitalism.

Social thought and the dominant economic, sociological, and political theories that legitimized the practices of autocentric, national-welfare-state development in the West, of the Soviet system in the East, and of populism in the South were largely inspired by Marx and Keynes. The new social relations of the postwar period, more favorable to labor, would inspire the practices of the welfare state, relegating the liberals to a position of insignificance. Marx's figure, of course, dominated the discourse of "actually existing socialism." But the two preponderant figures of the twentieth century gradually lost their quality as originators of fundamental critiques, becoming the mentors of the legitimation of the practices of state power. In both cases, there was a shift toward simplification and dogmatism.

Critical social thought moved, then, during the 1960s and 1970s, toward the periphery of the system. Here the practices of national populism—a poor version of Sovietism—triggered a brilliant explosion in the critique of "actually existing socialism." At the center of this critique was a new awareness of the polarization created by capital's global expansion, which had been underestimated, if not purely and simply ignored, for over a century and a half. This critique—of actually existing capitalism, of the social thought that legitimated its expansion, and of the theoretical and practical socialist critique of both—was at the origin of the periphery's dazzling entry into modern thought. Here was a rich and variegated critique—which it would be a mistake to reduce to "dependency theory," since this social thought reopened fundamental debates on socialism and the transition toward it. Furthermore, this critique revived the debate on Marxism and historical materialism, understanding from the start the necessity of transcending the limits of the Eurocentrism that dominated modern thought. Undeniably inspired for a moment by the Maoist eruption, it also initiated the

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critique of both Sovietism and the new globalism glimmering on the horizon.

The *Fin-de-Siécle* Crisis

Starting between 1968 and 1971, the collapse of the three postwar models of regulated accumulation opened up a structural crisis of the system reminiscent of that of the end of the nineteenth century. Growth and investment rates fell precipitously (to half of their previous levels); unemployment soared; pauperization intensified. The percentages used to measure inequality in the capitalist world increased sharply; the wealthiest 20 percent of humanity increased their share of the global product from 60 to 80 percent in the last two decades of this century. Globalization has been fortunate for some. For the vast majority, however—especially for the peoples of the South subjected to unilateral structural adjustment policies, and those of the East locked into a dramatic social demolition—it has been a disaster.

But this structural crisis, like its predecessor, is accompanied by a third technological revolution, which profoundly alters modes of labor organization, and (in the face of a fierce attack by global capital) divests the old forms of worker and popular organization and struggle of their efficiency and therefore of their legitimacy. The fragmented social movement has not yet found a formula strong enough to meet the challenges posed. But it has made remarkable breakthroughs in directions that enrich its impact: principally, women's powerful entry into social life, as well as a new awareness of environmental destruction on a scale which, for the first time in history, threatens all highly organized forms of life on this planet. Thus as the capitalist center's "five new monopolies" came gradually into view, an emerging multipolar global social movement (that is its potential counterweight, alternative, and successor) had elements already visible in outline.

The management of the crisis, based on a brutal reversal of relations of power in capital's favor, has made it possible for liberal "free market" recipes to impose themselves anew. Marx and Keynes have been erased from social thought and the

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"theoreticians" of "pure economics" have replaced analysis of the real world with that of an imaginary capitalism. But the temporary success of this highly reactionary utopian thought is simply the symptom of a decline—witchcraft taking the place of rationality—that testifies to the fact that capitalism is objectively ready to be transcended.

Crisis management has already entered the phase of collapse. The crises in Southeast Asia and Korea were predictable. During the 1980s, these countries (and China as well), managed to benefit from the world crisis through greater involvement in world exchanges (based on their "comparative advantage" of cheap labor), attracting foreign investment but remaining on the sidelines of financial globalization, and (in the cases of China and Korea) inscribing their development projects in a nationally controlled strategy. In the 1990s, Korea and Southeast Asia opened up to financial globalization, while China and India began to shift in the same direction.

Attracted by the region's high growth levels, the surplus of floating foreign capital flowed in, producing not accelerated growth but asset inflation in stocks and real estate. As had been predicted, the financial bubble burst only a few years later. Political reaction to this massive crisis has been new in several respects—different from that provoked by the Mexican crisis, for instance. The United States, with Japan following closely, attempted to take advantage of the Korean crisis to dismantle the country's productive system (under the fallacious pretext that it was controlled oligopolistically!) and to subordinate it to the strategies of U.S. and Japanese oligopolies. Regional powers attempted to resist by challenging the question of their insertion into financial globalization through reestablishing exchange controls in Malaysia or by removing immediate participation from their list of priorities in China and India.

This collapse of the financial dimension of globalization forced the G7 countries (the group of seven most advanced capitalist countries) to envisage a new strategy, provoking a crisis in liberal thought. It is in light of this crisis that we must examine the outline of the counterattack launched by the G7. Overnight,

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they changed their tune: the term "regulation," forbidden until then, reappeared in the group's resolutions. It became necessary to "regulate international financial flows." Joseph Stiglitz, chief economist of the World Bank at the time, suggested a debate on defining a new "post-Washington consensus." But this was too much for the current mouthpiece of U.S. hegemony, Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, who saw to Stiglitz's removal.

U.S. Hegemony Attacks—the Twenty-First Century Will Not Be American

In this chaotic conjuncture, the United States took the offensive once more, in order to reestablish its global hegemony and accordingly to organize the world system in its economic, political, and military dimensions. Has U.S. hegemony entered its decline? Or has it begun a renewal that will make the twenty-first century America's?

If we examine the economic dimension in the narrow sense of the term, measured roughly in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the structural tendencies of the balance of trade, we might conclude that American hegemony, so crushing in 1945, receded as early as the 1960s and 1970s, with the brilliant resurgence of Europe and Japan. The Europeans bring it up continuously, in familiar terms: the European Union is the first economic and commercial force on a world scale. The statement is hasty, however. For, if it is true that a single European market does exist, and even that a single currency is perhaps emerging, the same cannot be said of *a* European economy (at least not yet). There is no such thing as a "European productive system;" such a productive system, on the contrary, can be spoken of in the United States. The economies set up in Europe through the constitution of the historical bourgeoisie in the relevant states, and the shaping within this framework of autocentric national productive systems (even if these are open, even aggressively so), have stayed more or less the same. There are still no European TNCs: only British, German, or French TNCs. Capital interpenetration is no denser in inter-European relations than in the bilateral relations between each European nation and the

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United States or Japan. If Europe's productive systems have indeed been eroded, and if "globalized interdependence" has weakened them to such an extent that national policies lose a good deal of their efficiency, this is precisely to the advantage of globalization and the (U.S.) forces that dominate it, not to that of "European integration," which does not yet exist.

The hegemony of the United States rests on a second pillar, however: that of military power. Built up systematically since 1945, it now covers the whole of the planet, which is parceled out into regions—each under the requisite U.S. military command. This hegemony had been forced to accept the peaceful coexistence imposed by Soviet military might. Now that page has turned and the United States has gone on the offensive to reinforce its global domination. Henry Kissinger summed it up in a memorably arrogant phrase: "Globalization is only another word for U.S. domination." This American global strategy has five aims: to neutralize and subjugate the other partners in the triad (Europe and Japan), while minimizing their ability to act outside the orbit of the United States; to establish military control over NATO while "Latin-Americanizing" the fragments of the former Soviet world; to exert uncontested influence in the Middle East and Central Asia, especially over their petroleum resources; to dismantle China, ensure the subordination of the other great nations (India and Brazil), and prevent the constitution of regional blocs potentially capable of negotiating the terms of globalization; and to marginalize the regions of the South that represent no strategic interest.

The favored instrument of this hegemony is therefore military, as the highest-ranking representatives of the United States never tire of repeating. This hegemony, which guarantees the superiority of the triad over the world system, therefore demands that America's allies agree to follow in its wake. Great Britain, Germany, and Japan make no bones (not even cultural ones) about this imperative. But this means that the speeches about Europe's economic power (with which European politicians shower their audiences) have no real significance. By positioning itself exclusively on the terrain of mercantile squabbles, Europe (which has

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no political or social project of its own) has lost before the race has even started. Washington knows this well.

The principal body that implements Washington's chosen strategy is NATO, which explains why it has survived the collapse of the adversary that constituted the organization's *raison d'être.* NATO still speaks today in the name of the "international community," expressing its contempt for the democratic principle that governs this community through the UN. Yet NATO acts only to serve Washington's aims—no more and no less—as the history of the past decade, from the Gulf War to Kosovo, illustrates.

The strategy employed by the triad, under U.S. direction, takes as its aim the construction of a unipolar world organized along two complementary principles: the unilateral dictatorship of dominant TNC capital and the unfurling of a U.S. military empire, to which all nations must be compelled to submit. No other project may be tolerated within this perspective, not even the European project of subaltern NATO allies, and especially not a project entailing some degree of autonomy, like China's, which must be broken by force if necessary.

This vision of a unipolar world is being increasingly opposed by that of a multipolar globalization, the only strategy that would allow the different regions of the world to achieve acceptable social development, and would thereby foster social democratization and the reduction of the motives for conflict. The hegemonic strategy of the United States and its NATO allies is today the main enemy of social progress, democracy, and peace.

The twenty-first century will not be America's century. It will be one of vast conflicts, and the rise of social struggles that question the ambitions of Washington and of capital. The crisis is exacerbating contradictions within the dominant classes. These conflicts must take on increasingly acute international dimensions, and therefore pit states and groups of states against each other. One can already discern the first hints of a conflict between the United States, Japan, and their faithful Australian ally on the one hand, and China and other Asian countries on the other. Nor is it difficult to envisage the rebirth of a conflict between the United States and Russia, if the latter manages to

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extricate itself from the nightmarish spiral of death and disintegration into which Boris Yeltsin and his U.S. "advisors" have plunged it. And if the European Left could free itself from submission to the double dictates of capital and Washington, it would be possible to imagine that the new European strategy could be intertwined with those of Russia, China, India, and the third world in general, in a necessary, multipolar construction effort. If this does not come about, the European project itself will fade away.

The central question, therefore, is how conflicts and social struggles (it is important to differentiate between the two) will be articulated. Which will triumph? Will social struggles be subordinated, framed by conflicts, and therefore mastered by the dominant powers, even made instruments to the benefit of those powers? Or will social struggles surmount their autonomy and force the major powers to respond to their urgent demands?

Of course, I do not imagine that the conflicts and struggles of the twenty-first century will produce a remake of the previous century. History does not repeat itself according to a cyclical model. Today's societies are confronted by new challenges at all levels. But precisely because the immanent contradictions of capitalism are sharper at the end of the century than they were at its beginning, and because the means of destruction are also far greater than they were, the alternatives for the twenty-first century are (more than ever before) "socialism or barbarism."

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A Question of Place

by Grace Lee Boggs

This piece was originally read on WORT radio (Madison, WI) on March 27, 2000. It also appeared in the April 2–8 issue of the weekly *Michigan Citizen* (www.michigancitizen.com).

On February 29, 2000, a first grader in the Buell Elementary School in Flint took a semi-automatic rifle to school and fatally shot his classmate, six-year-old Kayla Rolland. Since then, there have been countless stories about the tragedy in the media. Those I have read or heard have focused on the chaos in the boy's family and/or guns in the home and community. All have avoided saying that Buell School is in Flint. Instead they have located it in "Mt. Morris Township, somewhere near Flint."

All except Michael Moore, the producer of *Roger and Me,* the rollicking documentary in which Moore keeps getting into the face of former General Motors (GM) CEO Roger Smith for raking in profits by laying off workers. In an article written the day after the tragedy (available on www.michaelmoore.com), Moore, a Flint native, informs us that "there is no such place" as Mt. Morris Township.

Buell Elementary School is in the Flint Beecher school district, and has a Flint address and a Flint phone number. But Flint officials, in collusion with GM, deny that Beecher is in Flint, which has been known as Buick City. They want to dissociate GM

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from the devastation and violence that have overtaken the city since the Buick plant closed down.

And the media goes along with this denial. For example, in a March 20 *Detroit News* article describing Kayla's dilapidated neighborhood, the reporters attribute the deterioration not to GM's abandonment but "to the passage of an ordinance banning residential construction on lots with less than 100 feet of road frontage."

I was in Flint a couple of weeks before the Buell shooting and GM's responsibility for the city's disintegration is as plain as day. A generation ago, Flint was a thriving working-class town. Now the abandoned Buick plant, spread out over an area as large as Detroit's downtown, sits like a ghostly monster in the midst of empty parking lots, surrounded by block after block of tiny houses, little more than shacks, which once housed GM workers. No wonder Flint suffers from one of the highest per capita rates of murder, rape, and theft in the country.

Even more insidiously, transnational corporations and the media are trying to erase place-consciousness from our minds altogether because they sense that it can seed a movement against global capitalism. That is why deepening our consciousness of place and organizing around place have become so important to movement-building in this period. Place-consciousness, in the words of Duke University historian Arif Dirlik, is the "radical other" of global capitalism.[1] Global capitalism relentlessly displaces people and abandons places because it views local communities, cities, and even nations as inconveniences in the path of progress.

Place-consciousness, on the other hand, encourages us to come together around common, local experiences and organize around our hopes for the future of our communities and cities. While global capitalism doesn't give a damn about the people or the natural environment of any particular place because it can always move on to other people and other places, place-based civic activism is concerned about the health and safety of people and places.

Place-based civic activism is also unique in the way that it links issues. Thus the Environmental Justice movement calls on peo-

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ple of color to struggle against environmental racism, which results in disproportionate air and land pollution in our communities. Inspired by the Environmental Justice movement, the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles decided that, whereas the struggle against transit racism in the 1950s centered around direct actions like Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat, today it means engaging bus riders, who are mostly people of color and minimum-wage workers, in the struggle for timely, clean, and safe public transit.[2]

Place-based civic activism also has important advantages over activism based on racial and gender identity which, in the last few decades, has consumed the energies of most progressives. Important as these identity struggles have been in the continuing struggle to humanize our society, they can lock us into single aspects of ourselves and ignore the multiple ways that we relate to one another in our communities—as neighbors, housewives, working parents, parents of schoolchildren, elders, children, sufferers from asthma and other disabilities, consumers, pedestrians, commuters, bus riders, citizens. Thus they have tended to isolate rather than to unite different constituencies. On the other hand, place-based civic activism provides opportunities to struggle around race, gender, and class issues inside struggles around place. Equally important, women naturally assume leadership of place-based struggles because they are so pivotal to neighborhood life.

It is amazing how much we can learn about movement-building from putting a school shooting in its place.

NOTES

1. Arif Dirlik, "Place-Based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place," *Review, A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economics, Historical Systems and Civilizations,* Vol. XXII, No. 2, 1999.
2. *A New Vision for Urban Transportation,* Strategy Center Publications, 3780 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90010.

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The Threat of Fascism in Austria

by Rick Kuhn

For the first time since the Second World War, the extreme right is a major component in a national European government.[1] The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) has half of the posts and the Deputy Chancellorship in its coalition with the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), sworn in on February 4, 2000. The only consistent features of FPÖ politics since 1986 have been racism and the determination of Jörg Haider, its most prominent figure, to take power in Austria. Haider is best known for his favorable comments about Nazi Germany, the honorable nature of members of the SS, and the role of the German army under Hitler in defending civilization.

The ÖVP's Wolfgang Schüssel may be Chancellor, but Haider is in a stronger position. Haider is not a member of the new Federal Government, but has stayed at the head of the State Government of Carinthia, in southeast Austria. While support for the ÖVP (Black) has slumped after the Black-Blue Coalition took office, the FPÖ (Blue) maintains its position at the polls. And Haider exercises a very different kind of control over his Party than Schüssel does over the ÖVP.

How could the Austrian far-right win 27 percent of the vote in last October's federal elections and now be an equal partner in government? This is particularly puzzling, given that Austria is

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not only a wealthy country but is far from facing severe economic or social problems. Neoliberal policies were introduced by the Grand Coalition between 1987 and 1999, in which the ÖVP was a junior partner to the Social Democrats (SPÖ). But the consequences of privatization, cuts in the welfare state, and the deregulation of markets have so far been relatively mild compared to other developed countries. Corporatist arrangements between the "social partners"—business and labor—remained in place, not only in industrial relations but also in the formulation of the government's economic and social policies. In terms of its political arrangements, Austria was the last social democracy.

There is no comparing the situation in Austria with the economic crisis and social tensions in East Germany since 1990 (where the rise of the extreme right has been worrisome but on a much smaller scale), let alone Russia today or Europe during the early 1930s. Is Haider simply an anomaly, a purely Austrian phenomenon? Before looking at the forces behind the FPÖ's participation in government and strategies to end it, however, it is important to work out exactly what sort of party it is.

Right-Wing Extremism, Right-Wing Populism, or Fascism?

Since taking over the leadership of the Freedom Party in 1986, Haider has steered it in a fascist direction in terms of ideology, organization, and personnel. The FPÖ has linked its criticisms of the established order in Austria to racist arguments. The new government's program includes cutting immigration quotas for family reunions, targeting illegal immigrants, discriminating against children in schools who do not speak German, enforcing a longer waiting period before immigrants can become citizens, as well as standard conservative measures like further privatizations; cuts in health, education, and welfare spending; and increased outlays for defense and policing.

For the FPÖ, unemployment, job security, education, and health problems are explained in terms of the numbers of foreigners in Austria. Shortly after taking office as the Premier of the State of Carinthia in March 1999, Haider started to dismantle the system of bilingual education for the Slovene

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minority.[2] He has also harnessed hostility to the *Proporz* system of allocating public sector jobs, down to the level of school inspectors, on the basis of party membership, to his goal of a "Third Republic" that will replace the corruption of the Second Republic, in place since the Second World War. While implying radical changes, Haider has not spelled out the role that democratic and parliamentary institutions would play in his vision of the future.

Calculated references to National Socialism have played an important role in the shift in Freedom Party ideology. They appeal to nostalgia for the Third Reich, legitimize fascism as a means to full employment, and imply that the SS were noble soldiers in the German armed forces. These references are also signals to hardcore fascist supporters that Haider is really with them, constrained only by legislation that outlaws holocaust denial and efforts to reestablish the Nazi Party. By being prepared to withdraw some comments and to argue that he has been misinterpreted, Haider also awakens sympathy for himself and his ideas, drawing those who vote FPÖ as a protest against the mainstream parties closer to him ideologically. These statements, combined with organizational measures the party has taken and the authority Haider has gained from electoral successes since he assumed power, have been part of the process of transforming the ideology and structure of the FPÖ. The Party's liberal wing was ascendant from the late 1970s to 1986. After becoming Party chairperson, Haider marginalized and then excluded it. In 1993, the last liberal FPÖ members of the National Council (lower house of parliament) left to form the Liberal Forum, which failed to win any seats in the national elections in 1999. The Freedom Party is now a thoroughly top-down organization (a *Führerpartei*), under Haider's control. No criticism of his policies or person is tolerated. A series of Party officials and members have been removed from office and/or expelled. Entire state organizations, most recently in Salzburg, have been reorganized to ensure Haider's unquestioned authority. For this reason, Haider's recent resignation from the leadership of the Party and replacement by the Deputy Chancellor Susanne Riess-Passer can only be regarded as a cosmetic change. Riess-Passer, a long-term, loyal

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subordinate of Haider's, can be relied upon to carry out his instructions. The maneuver also provides him with another excuse to distance himself from any unpopular policies implemented by the government.

Haider has promoted seasoned fascists in the Freedom Party. "Rightwing outsiders, even neo Nazi elements have been received into the FPÖ, won positions in the Party and have been elected to public office through it."[3] Andreas Mölzer, one of Haider's advisors and a Party ideologist, has contributed to a variety of German fascist journals and newspapers.[4] Haider himself has been prepared to be interviewed by such publications. In 1987, he participated in a secret meeting about the possibilities of cooperation with the leader of the fascist National Democratic Party, which was dissolved by the Constitutional Court the following year for attempting to revive the Nazi Party. Fascists in France, Italy, Russia, and Germany have welcomed the Freedom Party's entry into government with demonstrations in the streets. Neo-Nazi boot boys have also become more active in Austria itself.[5]

The Freedom Party has a great deal in common with the Nazi Party in Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Party: an extreme nationalist and racist ideology, an authoritarian internal structure, and a breathtaking cynicism in its populist appeals (particularly to owners of small businesses and other members of the middle strata). At this stage, it still lacks a central element of fascist parties: a para-military organization with the potential to attack victims and opponents on the streets. Le Pen's *Front National* in France and groups in Germany include such elements, but they are much less influential than the Freedom Party. At this stage, it would be a large risk for Haider to start building a fighting force, scaring away large numbers of people who have voted FPÖ as a protest. But participation in government legitimizes his activities in general and paves the way for more radical steps. By agreeing to a neoliberal program for the Black-Blue Coalition government, the Freedom Party is also specifically attempting to win more widespread support from the capitalist class. These developments, and the inevitability of deep social

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tensions during the next global recession, make full-strength fascism a real threat in Austria.

There are several factors behind Haider's success. Longer-term elements include the nature of the Party he took over (the third-largest throughout the period since 1949) and, closely related to this, the circumstances and consequences of the myth of Austria as the first victim of National Socialism.

Where Haider and the Freedom Party Came From

Since the late nineteenth century, politics in the German-speaking provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (and, after the First World War, the First Austrian Republic) were organized around three "camps." The Christian Social Party started as a vehicle for petty bourgeois protest against aristocratic rule and the expansion of big capital. This was the forerunner of the People's Party. By the start of the twentieth century, through an accommodation with the established order pioneered by their preeminent leader Karl Lueger, the Christian Socials had become a conservative, antisemitic clerical organization (with solid support amongst the peasantry and Catholic middle classes) that benefitted from the patronage of sections of the ruling class.

With the Austrian economy in ruins, Christian Social Chancellor Engelbert Dolfuss ended parliamentary democracy shortly after Hitler took power. Having defeated the labor movement in a short civil war in 1934, Dolfuss and his successor, Kurt Schuschnigg, presided over an Austro-fascist regime, squeezed between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

From 1889, the Social Democratic Party built a solid working-class base. But its leadership, and especially the right wing headed by Karl Renner, supported the Empire's war effort in August 1914, just as their German counterparts did. After the 1918 revolution, Renner was the first Chancellor of the Austrian Republic. But Social Democratic participation in government ended in 1920, and was followed by right-wing coalitions dominated by the Christian Socials. However, the SPÖ has participated in all Austrian governments since the Second World War—apart from the period when the People's Party ruled alone

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between 1966 and 1970, and now since February 2000. The Socialists were initially junior partners to the ÖVP. They governed alone between 1970 and 1983, as senior partners to the FPÖ to 1986 and to the ÖVP to 1999.

The third political current in Austrian politics has been German nationalism; with a strong emphasis on antisemitism, it long favored unification with Germany. The main base for German nationalism was anticlerical sections of the urban and rural middle class and elements in the state bureaucracy. Since the 1918–1920 border war with the new Yugoslavian Republic, racism and German nationalism have had a stronghold in the southern province of Carinthia. During the 1930s, the Nazi Party became the dominant element in this camp. As early as 1930, Haider's father went to Munich to join the Storm Troops. In 1938, Austria was incorporated into Germany (*Anschluss*). There was widespread support in Austria for this. The working class had been defeated in 1934, its organizations had been suppressed, and it could not be mobilized in opposition. Nor was Schuschnigg's regime, which had not resolved the country's intractable economic problems, popular. For much of the Austrian ruling class, incorporation into Germany—with its economic recovery powered by rearmament—was very attractive. After *Anschluss*, Haider's father returned to Upper Austria as a Nazi official. His mother was also involved in a Nazi organization before *Anschluss*. Many Austrian Jews were forced to give up or sell their property at trivial prices. A great uncle of Haider's acquired a large estate in Carinthia in precisely this way. Haider inherited it in 1986.

Western and Russian forces occupied Austria after the Second World War. But in a fiction designed to undermine efforts to reunite the country with Germany again, which also concealed the class basis of Nazism, the occupying powers deemed Austria the first victim of National Socialist foreign policy. The Social Democratic and People's Party politicians who emerged from the camps or returned from exile accepted this distortion to accelerate the shift of authority from the occupiers to Austrian institutions and to prevent an East-West partition like the one that occurred in Germany when the Cold War set in. Consequently,

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the process of de-Nazification was even more half-hearted than in West Germany.

When former Nazis were allowed to vote again in 1949, the People's Party and the Social Democrats tried to win their support. But a new party, the Union of Independents, specifically targeted this group. Its founders hoped to reincorporate the ex-Nazis into parliamentary politics around a liberal nationalist ideology, which had elements of continuity with the old third camp, but was hostile to National Socialism. The Union won 12 percent of the national vote.

The defeat of the October strike wave in 1950 broke militant and Communist influence in the union movement and established a precondition for a corporate system of industrial relations. Not only were wages and conditions negotiated in the Parity Commission, between the highly centralized Austrian Trade Union Federation and the Workers' Chamber (elected by all workers) on the one hand, and Chambers representing business and farmers on the other. Under the Grand Coalition, the Commission was also involved in all aspects of social and economic policy.

Meanwhile, the Union of Independents was increasingly dominated by its right wing. When it was reformed as the Freedom Party in 1956, "its top leadership consisted almost without exception of former National Socialists." The Chairperson, Anton Reinthaller, had been a Minister in the Nazi government of Austria, which oversaw *Anschluss*.[6] While German nationalism and the idea of a racial community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) were characteristic of the Party's conservative wing, the organization was electorally oriented and still included a liberal current. The Carinthian FPÖ inherited the particularly right-wing traditions of German nationalism in that state. After 1953, support for the Union of Independents/Freedom Party in federal elections was less than 10 percent. But the Party established a national organization and was the only opposition in the National Council after the Communist Party lost its representatives. The same sentiments which inspired the FPÖ's right wing also saturated the Austrian Gymnastics Association (a cultural and sporting body),

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several other youth organizations, and university student fraternities. His family background and membership in these groups shaped young Jörg Haider's outlook. At fourteen, he joined the Freedom Party's youth organization. At sixteen, in 1966, he made a prize-winning speech for the Austrian Gymnastics Association, published as "Are We Austrians Germans?" by a neo-Nazi newspaper in Germany.

In Germany, the Free Democratic Party started out much like the FPÖ. But its liberal wing came to dominate the FDP and it established a place in German politics by moving to the center. From the late 1950s, the Party's chairperson Friedrich Peter nudged the Austrian Freedom Party in the same direction, hoping to turn it into an acceptable alternative coalition partner for either the People's Party or the Social Democrats. The National Democratic Party split from the Free Democrats in 1966 and 1967 in reaction to this strategy. Peter appreciated Haider's oratorical talents and became his first important patron. During the 1970s and early 1980s, when the SPÖ was in government alone, Haider acclimated to the liberal turn in his Party's tactics.

As the long, postwar boom spluttered to an end, the Social Democrats lost their majority in the National Council and entered into a coalition with the liberalizing Freedom Party in 1983, now under chairperson Norbert Steger. But the FPÖ's right wing, especially in Carinthia, was restless and Haider turned himself into the figurehead of this dissatisfaction. When he replaced Steger as Party leader in 1986, the SPÖ ended the coalition. But the Freedom Party's share of the vote at the subsequent elections doubled.

Haider was now at the head of a significant national party, with almost thirty-seven thousand members. It was still far from ideologically homogenous and consisted of a series of regional organizations, often revolving around loyalties to state and even local leaders. Haider started to change this, as we have seen, by driving out the liberals. In the late 1990s, he also asserted central control over the state party organizations in Salzburg, Vienna, and Lower Austria. Loyalty to the FPÖ now means loyalty to Haider.

Unlike fascists in other countries, Haider has not been faced with the task of creating an organization from the ground up or

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of capturing a conservative party with deep bourgeois democratic traditions of its own. The Freedom Party was not a fascist party at its foundation and in the strict sense is still not one. But there is a very strong bond of continuity between it and the Nazi Party. It has always included a layer of activists open to fascist ideas and, since 1986, this layer has been given greater confidence, direction, and tighter organization by Haider. It has also been expanded through an influx of people from small neo-Nazi groups.

Opportunist Protest

The longer-term elements in Haider's success have been supplemented by recent developments: widespread insecurity during the last decade and a half, and a series of maneuvers to expand support for the Freedom Party at the expense of its competitors. The political and economic circumstances of the last fifteen years in Austria have been particularly favorable for Haider. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Freedom Party did not benefit particularly from being the party of opposition to a Grand Coalition. The economy was expanding rapidly. Anticommunism and Austria's position as a formally neutral state on the edge of "the West" helped cement a social consensus. The period since the reformation of the Grand Coalition in 1987 has been different. It is certainly true that the Austrian economy is far from being in crisis. The unemployment rate remains below five per cent (using the standard European Union [EU] measure). But economic growth has been slower. And, as a consequence, the restructuring of Austria's place in the world economy has not been cushioned as it was during the period of postwar reconstruction. Major economic changes have increased the insecurity of all social classes. Preparation for joining the EU in 1993 was only one aspect of globalization. Most of Austria's very large, state-owned manufacturing and banking sector has been privatized. In 1998 alone, the Austrian Government raised almost three billion dollars by selling off government enterprises. Many jobs have been axed. But unemployment figures have been depressed by large numbers of people retiring early. The Grand Coalition also

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made cuts to education and social security. In June 1999, it legislated for a taxation reform in the interests of business.

So Haider has been well-placed to direct widespread economic worries against immigrants and ethnic minorities. He has called for a halt to immigration, pointing out that the number of unemployed is similar to the number of resident foreigners and blaming them for crime. He champions the cultural rights of the German majority—threatened, he claims, by concessions to foreigners. One of the Freedom Party's attempts to channel discontent in 1993 was to collect signatures for an initiative that would have forced the National Council to consider a series of racist demands. These included stopping all immigration, excluding children who don't speak German from normal education, and imposing a 30 percent limit in any class on the proportion of children of compulsory school age whose first language was not German. The fact that Austrian governments and the ÖGB, through the Parity Commission, pursued discriminatory policies against foreign workers for many years made racism more respectable. During the 1990s, the Grand Coalition went further, implementing measures demanded by the FPÖ that reduced immigration, tightened asylum laws, and required foreigners to carry full documentation of their residency status at all times.[7]

Using Nazi terminology to describe "threats" to the German ethnic majority, Haider has also cashed in on the limited denazification of Austria after the war. The People's Party contributed to this success in its desperation to have Kurt Waldheim reelected to the largely ceremonial position of National President in 1986. A striking symbol of ruling-class politics in Austria, Waldheim had forgotten that he had been a Nazi even before *Anschluss*. He was reelected on the back of an apologetic campaign, which rejected "foreign" (in some formulations, "Jewish") interference in Austrian affairs. Of course, the Freedom Party was in the best position to benefit from the legitimation of such sentiments. Haider's statement in 1991 about the effectiveness of the Nazi's employment policy, for example, reinforced his support among the hard right in Austria and appealed to the much wider constituency of people who thought Waldheim had also been

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unfairly victimized for his Nazi past. It also lost Haider the position of head of the Carinthian government, which he held from 1989. But, zigzagging back and forth from the National to the Carinthian State Assembly, he regained the position in early 1999 when his Party won 42 percent of the vote in state elections.

As Haider has extended his control over the Freedom Party, he has maneuvered to expand its support base. This has not only involved very rapid shifts and reversals in policy, as with the FPÖ's policy on EU membership, but also the modification of long-standing traditions. So Haider has on some occasions played down aspects of the German nationalist tradition, preferring a German-Austrian to a pan-German racial community. The late 1990s have seen a series of overtures to the reactionary wing of the Catholic hierarchy, in an attempt to undermine an element in the support base of the People's Party.[8] The long-term decline in the rural population and cuts in subsidies for agriculture associated with EU membership have also eroded the ÖVP's constituency. The neoliberal elements in the Black-Blue Coalition's program serve to attract capitalist-class support away from the SPÖ and the increasingly moribund People's Party toward the Freedom Party, which is seen as embracing "responsible policies." The program promises that the public service will be modeled on private corporations, while the number of public service, university, and school employees will be cut. The unemployed will have to work for substandard wages, while employed workers will suffer cuts in termination payments, higher retirement ages, and reduced leave-entitlements (as well as increased user charges and payments in the health and pension systems). In addition to further privatizations, the Black-Blue Government promises the promotion of private old age-insurance schemes, deregulation of opening hours for stores, introduction of markets for electricity and gas, and fewer legislative protections for workers that are "a disproportionately large burden" for employers.[9]

The FPÖ has also targeted the Social Democrats' working-class base. Haider's attempt to split the trade union movement, by setting up a union associated with his Party in 1997, flopped. Appealing to conservative attitudes toward women, he has also

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promised increased payments to families in which the mother stays at home to look after children. But the Freedom Party's main appeal to workers was as a means of protesting against the Grand Coalition's neoliberal policies. The FPÖ's largest gains in 1999, compared to the 1995 federal elections, were at the expense of the SPÖ.

The Austrian Greens eventually provided an alternative for electoral protests against the Grand Coalition, winning 7 percent of the vote in 1999. They first won seats in the National Council in 1987, but suffered severe internal divisions until 1994. The main obstacle to left-wing opposition to the Social Democrat/People's Party Government, however, was not the lack of a parliamentary vehicle, but the hegemony of the SPÖ. Government policy accommodated, but did not create, the sources of the real insecurities experienced by the Austrian population. Global integration and pressures on profit rates meant that Austrian corporations needed to cut costs, rationalize employment, and push the government into reducing taxes and public outlays, while delivering windfall profits to the buyers of privatized state enterprises. Decades of "social partnership" have meant that the Austrian Trade Union federation, which claims one and a half million members in a country of only eight million people, has been more concerned about negotiating the terms of these changes than systematically mobilizing workers to oppose them. Union density has been falling in Austria and support for the Freedom Party, even among organized workers, has been growing. Its strongholds in the union movement are in the police force, security services, and Defense Ministry. The Austrian trade union movement is large, coherent, and potentially powerful. But its sizeable bureaucracy, tightly integrated into the two main political parties (especially the SPÖ) has not led a serious mass struggle against a government for generations. Strike levels in Austria have been low by international standards for many decades.

The seeming paradox of the FPÖ's success is therefore best explained in terms of the state of capital accumulation, the mainstream parties, and the Freedom Party itself. A concern to shore up their competitiveness and profits has led wider sections of the capitalist class to support more radical neoliberal policies

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promised by the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition. At the same time, the stresses and uncertainties created by domestic and international capitalist competition have led many Austrians, disillusioned by the mainstream parties' complicity in the restructuring process, to look for political alternatives, despite ongoing prosperity. The existence in the FPÖ of a significant layer of rightwing extremists and fascists, with a long tradition and considerable experience, means that the Party, under Haider, has been well-placed to use racism to mobilize this discontent. The recipe for the Freedom Party's rise has distinctively Austrian proportions of capitalist restructuring, racism, racist organizations, and discredited political institutions. But the ingredients can be found across the planet.

Strategies of Resistance

Schüssel has claimed that, by giving the Freedom Party political responsibility, he will domesticate Haider. German conservatives made exactly this argument when they put Hitler into power in 1933. This approach can only accelerate the emergence of a powerful fascist movement in Austria. Outside Austria, the strategy for dealing with Haider that has attracted most attention is one of international diplomatic isolation by the EU and other countries. This has been important *at a symbolic level*, heartening Haider's opponents in Austria. In practical terms, the diplomatic boycott has been of marginal significance. Although bilateral meetings with Austria have been reduced, most governments have taken care not to let this affect their trade. Austria, moreover, continues to participate in the multilateral forums and activities of the EU, particularly at the bureaucratic level.

The demonstrations inside Austria against the Freedom Party have been of much greater real significance. Three hundred thousand people crowded onto Vienna's Ringstrasse on February 19 to protest the Black-Blue government. This put enormous pressure on the government, established a solid foundation for further activity, and pushed Haider into his tactical resignation from the FPÖ's top post. The SPÖ, Greens, human rights organizations, women's groups, social democratic union fractions, and some unions supported the action. What is more, the largest

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identifiable element in the demonstration was trade unionists with their banners.

The massive mobilization against the new government drew on a tradition which goes back to the "Sea of Lights" in January 1993, when two hundred fifty thousand people turned out against Haider's racist initiative and the fascist murders of asylum seekers in Germany. That demonstration played a decisive role in ensuring that Haider did not reach his target of five hundred thousand signatures. When the prospect of an ÖVP-FPÖ coalition first emerged after 1999 elections, there was a demonstration of fifty thousand in Vienna. This, at least, delayed its formation by several months. Other large protests preceded and have followed the February 19 event. The rich and famous, including members of the government, suffered the indignity of having to enter the Opera Ball, the highlight of Vienna's social calendar, through a fifteen-thousand-strong picket. These actions found support in rallies against Haider in Germany, France, Britain, the United States, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Denmark. The Mayday 2000 demonstration in Vienna, with about one hundred thousand participants, was the largest in years.

The size of the demonstrations against Haider indicates the scope for involving people in ongoing activity. But by themselves they have proved insufficient to paralyze the FPÖ, rule out further evolution in a fascist direction, or bring down the Black-Blue Coalition. They do indicate the immense potential that can be tapped to achieve these goals and to slash the roots of fascism in an economic system that creates insecurities about jobs, incomes, and social well-being. Senior union officials have taken a strong verbal stand against aspects of the government's program. Union leaders have also endorsed token strikes over government plans for rationalization and the total privatization of Telekom Austria, the Post Savings Bank, and Austria Tabak. But the ÖGB, whose president is an SPÖ parliamentarian, has expressed a willingness to negotiate, rather than initiating preparations for sustained, mass industrial action.

There has certainly been strong rank-and-file support for a militant response to threats of privatizations and cuts to workers'

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entitlements. The SPÖ and ÖGB, however, regard demonstrations and strikes as props in an electoral strategy and in negotiations with the government, rather than as means to bring it down. In March, the new chair of the Social Democrats, Alfred Gusenbauer, said he was prepared to grant the government a probationary year. He and the Greens' leader, Alexander van der Bellen, initially favored EU sanctions, but later softened their positions. It will take consistent, organized pressure from below, independent of the SPÖ, Green, and ÖGB leaderships, to bring about the kind of sustained action that can not only stop the Black-Blue measures but bring down the government in a way that cripples the right.[10] If that does not occur, there is every chance that Haider will pull the plug on the Coalition and reap the benefit in the subsequent elections. In this case, the threat of fascism will grow across Europe and beyond. Should working-class initiatives help bring down the Austrian government, this would not only build the international movement against fascism. It would also be a major advance on the inspiring protests against neoliberalism in November 1999 in Seattle.

NOTES

1. There is a partial precedent: the fascist Alleanza Nazionale/MSI of Giannfranco Fini was a junior partner in Silvio Berlusconi's 1994 coalition government in Italy.
2. "Konflikt um zweisprachige Posten," *Standard* (Vienna), May 29, 1999.
3. Brigitte Bailer and Wolfgang Neugebauer, "Die FPÖ: vom Liberalismus zum Rechtsextremismus" in Stiftung Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, *Handbuch Österreichischen Rechtsextremismus* (Wien: Deuticke, 1994), p. 383.
4. In 1999, Mölzer was editor-in-chief of a weekly that carried an article calling Hitler "a great social revolutionary." Peter Mayr, "FP-Ideologe im Visier des Staatsanwalts," *Standard*, August 4, 1999.
5. Thomas Vasek, "Braunes Revival," *Profil* (Vienna), April 21, 2000.
6. Gerd Kräh, *Die Freiheitlichen unter Jörg Haider* (Frankfurt um Main: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 80.
7. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, "Social democracy in one country: immigration and minority policy in Austria" in Gareth Dale and Mike Cole, eds., *The European Union and Migrant Labour* (Oxford: Berg, 1999).
8. Georg Windisch, "FPÖ sucht Kulturkampf-Gefährten," *Standard*, August 20, 1999.
9. Österreichische Volkspartei and Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, *Zukunft im Herzen Europas: Österreich neu regieren* (Vienna: Österreichische Volkspartei and Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, 2000), p. 25.
10. "Neue Linke aufbauen! Für die Mai-Demos mobilisieren!," *Linkswende* (Vienna), April 2000: http://members.xoom.com/linkswende/.

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Alienation in American Society

by Fritz Pappenheim

This lecture was presented to a student conference on "Socialism in America" held at Yale University in 1964. It was later issued as a pamphlet by Monthly Review Press, but has been out of print for many years. It may seem odd to reissue it here, since the intervening decades have seen the publication of numerous important works on this same subject, including in the early 1970s such landmark studies as István Mézáros' *Marx's Theory of Alienation* and Bertell Ollman's *Alienation.* But Pappenheim's approach was distinctive, not only because of its accessibility, but because it concentrated from beginning to end on the link between Marx's concepts of alienation and exploitation. Rather than using Marx's notion of alienation as the basis for an abstract humanism divorced from concrete struggle, and as a means of avoiding Marx's more developed political-economic critique of capitalism—as too many have done—Pappenheim stresses the close, indeed inextricable, relationship between a world of alienation and a world of exploitation. Notes for this piece are available from the *MR* office. —The Editors

Marx's ideas on alienation, which had been ignored for a long time, have become quite fashionable in recent years. Frequently they are even overemphasized at the expense of other concepts of Marx, in particular, his economic concepts. This trend is sometimes due to the attempt to make Marx respectable and to win new supporters for him, especially in intellectual circles which show some interest in socialism but are still reluctant to accept the Marxian analysis of our society. These people are often told: Don't worry about the later Marx, who wrote the *Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital*, and who was so tactless as to develop the theory of exploitation. Concentrate on the early Marx, whose *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, for instance, were

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concerned mainly with human values and the sublime things in human life, and who developed the concept of alienation.[1]

I personally believe it is a mistake to separate Marx's theory of alienation from his theory of exploitation. Alienation and exploitation condition each other; they are linked to each other. It is the very essence of Marx's insight *not* to isolate man's alienation from economic conditions and trends—as Hegel and the followers of philosophical idealism had done—but to trace alienation to the basic structure and development of capitalist economy and society. In the second part of this lecture, I will attempt to show this. But first I want to examine with you what people mean when they talk about alienation, and in what way the frequent use of this term reflects the American scene at mid-century.

If we want to try to understand alienation, we must ask: Alienation from what?

There are three types of alienation. First, there is man's alienation from himself. Modern man often finds it hard to be himself; he has become a stranger to himself. At the same time, he has become estranged, or alienated, from his fellow man. And finally, he experiences alienation from the world in which he lives.

These three forms of alienation—from ourselves, from other men, and from our world—are interlinked. They actually represent three phases of one process. Marx particularly emphasized the connections between them. This is the very core of his approach to the problem of alienation.

In my book, I illustrated the links between the various forms of alienation by describing a young amateur photographer.[2] He had read about a picture contest sponsored by a popular magazine; always eager to earn some extra money and to see his name in print, he decided to try for the prize. He got it for a photograph of a traffic accident which showed the anguished expression of one of the victims in the throes of death. This action of the photographer symbolized for me the attitude of the alienated man who, possessed by a need to turn every experience into an object, a tool for attaining his ends, can ask only one question when he comes face to face with an event or a human being: "What's

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in it for me?" And this spirit of calculation remains even in the very face of death.

Some of you will say: We certainly know people who think and act like this photographer. For them, men and things matter only insofar as they can be utilized for their own purposes. But are they not a small and exceptional minority?

This is a consoling thought, but it is not a very realistic one. The orientation represented by the photographer has grown so strong, has become so nearly universal, that in almost all of us there is a tendency *not* to relate to the happening as a whole or to the other person as a whole; we tend to isolate that one fraction which is important to us and to remain indifferent observers of the rest. The young man I have been talking about is known as a very decent fellow, ready to help anybody who is suffering. If a person of this kind, when he witnesses the agony of a dying man, can think only of taking a picture, it shows that there is a cleavage between the prize-seeking photographer and the human being in him. He is alienated from the situation in which he is involved and, at the same time, alienated from himself.

It seems to me that this kind of division in thought is typical of all of us. We are almost always interested in only that fraction of reality that can serve our ends; we are indifferent to the remaining realities that do not concern us. The more we advance in this separation, the more we create the split within ourselves.

Let me give you another example. I know a white minister in a small town in Alabama. He is as much opposed to racial discrimination as are most of us in this hall. He has said to friends: "To cling to segregation means to pay merely lip service to the teachings of Christ." But when he was asked by a young student of theology, "When are you going to implement the Christian gospel and open your church to worshippers of all races?" his sad and resigned answer was, "You know as well as I do that the day I did that I would not have a church left." Here is a situation analogous to the young photographer. When the minister does not focus on the gospel as a whole, but tries to leave out a part of it, that part which could get him into hot water, he cannot help experiencing an inner split between the minister who

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is committed to the teachings of Christ and the hired employee of the congregation who surrenders his conviction in order to retain his job. Such a cleavage has become the fate, not only of figures in public life, but of all of us.

In the United States many people hold membership in a church with whose creed or religious tradition they are not necessarily in accord; they belong to the church simply because membership in it provides them with a certain degree of respectability and social prestige. I have known artists dedicated to new and creative ideas, whose work was not generally accepted; they could not find a market. Many of them have given up the life of the isolated, struggling artist in order to work as draftsmen in the art department of some advertising agency. And I also know those women whom we call "corporation wives." Concerned with their husbands' careers, they select their friends from among the "right people" rather than from among those they feel really akin to.

There are many tragic manifestations in this country of such alienation and indifference toward human beings. In March, 1964, a man attacked a woman with a knife, first wounding her and then killing her. This happened in a parking place in Kew Gardens, a residential section just outside New York. The attack lasted half an hour, during which 38 persons saw the killing—all respectable, middle-class, law-abiding citizens. Not one of those who watched this cruel drama from the window of his "home," and who heard the victim's cries for help thought it necessary to call the police. After seeing this act of violence, most of them went to sleep again.

A few weeks later, in Albany, New York, a 19-year-old boy, afflicted with mental illness, was seen on the corner cornice of the twelfth floor of a hotel, apparently intent on jumping. Some 4,000 people were watching him from below. A few were betting money on the outcome; others shouted, "Jump! Jump! Don't be a coward!" One well-dressed man said to his companion: "I hope he jumps this way; otherwise, we'll miss it!" The boy was finally rescued by his 7-year-old nephew, who gave him a hand across the roof of the building. Many spectators complained; they had been deprived of a sensation.

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These examples show how far indifference toward others has gone, how alienated the man of our time is. But this alienation does not necessarily enter the individual's consciousness; people who are aware of their alienation are the exceptions. The alienated man is frequently a successful man. As long as the success continues, it often engenders a certain numbness toward the price the individual is paying, toward the fact that he has become estranged from himself. Only in periods of crisis does he become aware of alienation. Societies, too, often do not feel disturbed by forces of alienation. Only in critical phases of their history do they become alert to the problem.

Our society is in such a crisis today. This may be the reason why the word "alienation" has come so much into vogue. We have not enough time here to study the various manifestations of the crisis: the emptiness and meaninglessness of modern life, the terrible loneliness of the individual, his isolation and drifting, and so on. All of this has been described often enough, not only in sociological works but in such plays as Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *After the Fall*, and in works by Tennessee Williams, Salinger, Kerouac, Updike, and many others. It has been reflected likewise in some of the basic works on existentialist philosophy which take man, the total stranger, for their central theme and which emphasize that homelessness is man's fate.

Homelessness, says Heidegger, is now the fate of all, the fate of the world. The existentialists always concentrate on the man who has no relation to anybody or anything else, who is totally lost, floating at the mercy of the waves or abandoned in a wasteland with no signposts. Heidegger treats with disdain the effort to come to a philosophy of values which can serve as a landmark to man in this wilderness.

Several people in the United States have told me: "I have many acquaintances but not a single friend." And this awareness of being alone and cut off continues unabated, in spite of the tendency toward "togetherness," and the popularity of words like fellowship, pal, neighbor. Words of this kind do not have much meaning at present. The same is true of the word, "community," which is used so glibly but which for many people is something

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abstract, remote, alien. This is perhaps one reason why we hear so much about delinquency, corruption and graft, payola, rigged television shows, college cheating, scandals in public administration. A few years ago, at a period when many television scandals were breaking, John Steinbeck returned from a stay in England. In a letter to Adlai Stevenson, he said that he was not sure whether he had done well to come back, for not only our television shows but our whole system of morality is rigged. These are ugly facts, and I am afraid that we will be faced with them as long as people do not feel themselves a *part* of the community but are alienated from it and use it for their own ends.

Let me say in this context that many a person senses a split between his existence as a private individual and as a citizen. This often engenders a withdrawal from the realm of politics, a retreat which, until recently, has been characteristic of the present younger generation in general, not only of the beatniks. It is easy to blame the young for their political apathy. But their attitudes are not surprising. To many of them, any talk about the political responsibility of the citizen sounds totally phony. What can we say to those young people who doubt that those who *do* play a role in our political life are genuinely concerned about great political issues? Political leaders and statesmen are often alienated themselves, and are thus deprived of an authentic relationship to the historical forces which shape our age. They are therefore incapable of coming to grips with the decisive issues of our period. Instead of really understanding historical trends, they try to manipulate them and subject them to *their* designs and schemes, which often have quite limited purposes. Political "leaders" become more and more like public relations men, like sales managers who are trying to find the right sales pitch. Let me give two illustrations of this tendency to manipulate political issues.

When Richard and Pat Nixon toured Latin America a few years ago, angry masses broke through the cordons of police and spat into the faces of these American "good-will ambassadors." But this shocking manifestation was not taken as a challenge to try to understand what was going on in South America and to reexamine United States relationships with our neighbors. In-

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stead, the travelers returned from their mission to a hero's welcome. Every effort was made to present their trip to the American people, not as a stunning defeat but as a *triumph.*

A few years later, out of the Cuban Revolution, a battle cry was born which was soon echoed by the masses throughout Latin America. It embodies the spirit of the embattled guerrillas of the Sierra Maestra in four simple words: Cuba, si! Yankee, no! President Kennedy tried to offset the revolutionary reality of these words with a slogan of his own. At a reception for 250 diplomats from Latin America and for Congressional leaders and their wives in the White House, on the occasion of the launching of the Alliance for Progress, he proposed the ingenious new motto: Progress, yes! Tyranny, no! A catchy phrase—but what does it have to say about the concrete, deeply-rooted problems of South America?

In general, I believe more attempts are made today *not* to see the reality than to see it. A few years ago a British sociologist wrote: "British society today exhibits a greater unwillingness to discover, to collect and to face up to the social facts of life than at any time in the last hundred years."[3] This statement, I think, applies to American society even more forcefully, and not only to "the average American" but also to leading intellectuals whose brilliant minds qualify them to become special advisers at the White House. One of these special advisers, the celebrated historian, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., wrote an article some years ago describing the difficulty of the liberal's role in a country in which "the major problems of the economic structure seem to be solved." He started his article by saying: "The present-day liberal is bound to face the America of the 1950's with dismay. While stretches of poverty remain in our land, we have nonetheless achieved a steadily rising national output and something approaching full employment (as one Democratic politician explained the 1952 election, 'The trouble is, we ran out of poor people')."[4] What Mr. Schlesinger thinks about his statement today, after the President of the United States has found it necessary to declare a "War on Poverty," I do not know. It really doesn't matter much. I have quoted him only to show how divorced and alienated from our historical reality the thinking

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of some of our historians has become, and how even men of intelligence present interpretations which betray an almost pathetic lack of understanding of the real trends of our period.

Mr. Schlesinger and other historians of a similar outlook do not represent isolated cases. They are in "good company." For instance, quite a few sociologists, in an understandable revolt against abstract and empty theories and systems, have turned to so-called empiricism. This could be all to the good. But the mere gathering of isolated facts and data in itself is not conducive to the understanding of social reality or of significant trends in society. In the last decades we have collected a huge amount of data and have acquired thorough knowledge about questions which are highly specialized, and at the same time thoroughly irrelevant. I regret that there is no time now to give examples of some of the complicated but trivial problems to which sociologists dedicate their efforts today, with the result that they either look away from the issues of our social reality or fail to grasp their true significance.

2

So far, I have tried to show how man is separated from himself, from his fellow men, from his political community, and from the forces which shape the trends of our age. The question arises:

Is alienation characteristic of our modern civilization, or has it existed in previous ages? My answer is: Many societies in earlier stages of history have experienced alienation. But I think that both in its forms and in its extent the alienation differed from that of modern times. It has now become much intensified and broader, and has actually turned into a dominant trend.

What are the reasons for this increased alienation? To answer this question we must look at the social and economic structure of modern civilization. Let us look first at the social basis. And let us remember that human associations can be of two kinds. First, there are associations which grow out of calculation. Individuals have figured out that they can pursue their interests more effectively if they are not isolated from each other; they realize that it is advantageous to join together. There are no deep bonds here. The members of such an association can join or leave at

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will. Secondly, there is a type of association which does not arise out of a conscious design but to which one *belongs,* as one belongs to one's home. In this kind of association, persons are strongly tied together. Its members have a feeling of solidarity, they stand together in good times and in bad, and they do not consider the connection terminated the moment it no longer brings advantages.

The differences between these two types of association are crucially important. They were first described about 80 years ago by the German sociologist, Ferdinand Tönnies. He calls the first association, deliberately established to promote the interests of its members, *Gesellschaft;* the second one, where the members are strongly united, he calls *Gemeinschaft.* An adequate translation of these words is difficult, and with your permission I want to go on using the German terms.[5] If we enter a *Gesellschaft,* we do so with only a fraction of our being, that part which corresponds to the specific purposes of the organization. Members of a taxpayers' association, persons who own stock in a company—these are related to one another not as whole persons but only as taxpayers or as stockholders. It is different in the *Gemeinschaft,* the purest form of which Tönnies saw in the family, especially in the relationship between mother and child, a relationship where unity is the first stage in development, and separation the later phase. The members of a *Gemeinschaft* are bound to each other as whole persons rather than as fragmented parts of individuals. To sum up: In the *Gemeinschaft,* members are essentially united in spite of occasional separation—even the separation of death. In the *Gesellschaft,* members are essentially separated from each other in spite of occasional or even frequent connection.

What has all this to do with alienation, and with the view that alienation has developed strongly in modern society? We must recognize one deplorable but stubborn fact, which cannot be disputed away: The forces of *Gesellschaft* are much stronger than the forces of *Gemeinschaft* today, so much so that the victory of *Gesellschaft* over *Gemeinschaft* is almost complete. We move every day within a large number of associations shaped by the forces of *Gesellschaft.* But, in addition, those associations which, according to their nature ought to be *Gemeinschaft* groups—family,

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neighborhood, church—have become in reality *Gesellschaft* associations.

Can this trend be reversed? Can *Gesellschaft* lead back to *Gemeinschaft?* Many people, among them distinguished sociologists, think so, and refer to social clubs, fraternal organizations, nationality groups, and the like, which seem to have a *Gemeinschaft* character. I personally am skeptical about the possibility of traveling the road back to *Gemeinschaft;* in my opinion the trend toward *Gesellschaft* is the prevailing trend in our modern society. And now let me examine with you the way in which *Gesellschaft,* and not *Gemeinschaft,* corresponds to the basic structure of our economy.

Our economic system is market-centered; it is essentially a system of *commodity* production. A commodity is characterized by the split between its exchange value and its use value; the exchange value becomes more important than the use value, the *intrinsic value.*[6] We thus produce and sell commodities, not because we have an inner relationship to their intrinsic value but because we are interested in their exchange value. There is a deep affinity between the commodity and the type of association which we call *Gesellschaft.* As we are related only to one fraction of the commodity, the exchange value, so also in personal associations we are related only to one fraction of other individuals, not to their intrinsic value as human beings. This parallel is more than coincidental. It indicates that an economy based on the dominance of exchange value engenders—we might almost say, *demands*—human relations which are characterized by the trend toward *Gesellschaft* and alienation.

This view is often challenged by anti-Marxists. They try to refute Marx and like to lecture him even in his grave, because in his supposed naiveté he overlooked the fact that trade and commodities existed a long time before the rise of capitalism. Such a "correction," I believe, would not be too upsetting for Marx, since both in his *Critique of Political Economy* and in *Capital* (in the first chapter on commodities) he emphasized the fact that the commodity form "makes its appearance at an early date in history." He adds, however, that it does not make its appearance "in the same dominant, hence characteristic manner as nowa-

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days."[7] A distinction must be made, of course, between societies in which exchange of goods is a more or less sporadic phenomenon and plays only a subordinate role and societies which are primarily and essentially geared to the production of commodities.

This difference is not only one of degree; it takes on a qualitative significance. Once commodity production becomes the universal economic mode, all of man's activities come to center around it. Its main feature—the paramount role of exchange value—reaches beyond the merely economic realm and penetrates the whole of human existence. What this does to the relationship between human beings was strikingly brought home to me by a statement I read in a daily paper some time ago:

> Joseph Brayshaw, former president of the British National Council of Family Relations, commented on a recent visit to the United States. He said the "fantastic material prosperity" of the United States has fostered the assumption that things are expendable "and I had the uneasy feeling that something of this attitude of mind might have tinged the American outlook on personal relations. If they go wrong, you can always find a more up-to-date model in a new wife or husband. I wondered whether, all unconsciously, people as well as things were coming to be regarded as expendable."[8]

The comparison of husbands and wives with old and new models, while shocking, is not the only reason why Mr. Brayshaw's statement is significant. Opponents of socialism often claim that in a socialist society—for reasons within its very structure—the human being will not be recognized as an end in himself but will be used as a tool, and thus will become expendable. While I cannot go into this argument here, I will say that the statement seems to be hypocritical, because—if Mr. Brayshaw is right—we are already, under capitalism, living in a society that has produced human relations which make man an *object*, and thus expendable.

Exchange value enters not only the relationship between man and man, destroying the possibility for genuine friendship and fellowship. I believe that exchange value, which has long ceased to be merely an economic category, invades almost all realms of our lives: our art and education, our community living, our political struggles.

I will add only a few words concerning its role in the area of political development. I have indicated our tendency to apply

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Madison Avenue techniques to political controversies, to carry over advertising methods used to sell Coca Cola, deodorants, and laxatives to the realm of politics. This transfer of the sales pitch to political issues is possible only if we consider political issues in the same way that we consider commodities. Decisions of political leaders and groups often do not emanate from a commitment to ideas or from a political vision of the future; they are taken on the basis of an expected *quid pro quo*. The politician calculates: If I or my group delivers the commodity, the receiver of the merchandise will have to reciprocate and come forth with payment of an equivalent exchange value. This happens frequently in domestic politics—as, for example, in the field of civil rights.

Recently at the request of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, James Baldwin invited a number of Negro intellectuals and artists; among them Kenneth Clark, Lorraine Hansberry, and Jerome Smith, to a meeting at the Justice Department. The President, on Robert Kennedy's advice, had already sent troops into Mississippi and the federal government had made various declarations in favor of civil rights legislation and had given important posts to a few Negro citizens. It seems that the Attorney General had called the meeting to find out what the Negro intellectuals were going to do *in return* for favors received. Miss Hansberry said later that he was much astonished when the Negroes present did not come forth with the expected statement that he, the Attorney General, was great, and that the administration was doing a fine job. He was surprised when Baldwin stated, "I would have trouble convincing my nephew to go to Cuba to liberate the Cubans in defense of a government which says it is doing every thing it can and can't liberate me."

Robert Kennedy's lack of understanding seems to me to parallel the lack of understanding of Arthur Schlesinger, to which I referred earlier. But this is not why I mention the meeting at the Justice Department. I mention it because it shows how a high government official, in taking "a good stand" in the civil rights struggle, regards this stand as something done, not for the nation, but for the *Negro* part of the nation, and in *exchange* for this he can expect Negroes to do something for him and the

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government. This dominance of the idea of exchange suggests that the famous slogan, "Do not ask what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country," impressive though it may sound, is not in line with reality.

I would like now to say a few words about the impact of the commodity form on man's relationship to his work. It is understandable that the assembly-line worker doesn't get much inner satisfaction from his work as such. He carries it out mainly in order to get the pay envelope—the exchange value. A similar condition also prevails, I think, in many phases of professional work, although the professional person who enjoys a certain degree of prestige and status may be more likely to fool himself about the real situation. Sometimes he may honestly think that he does his work because he believes in its inner meaning, and that his professional activity has little to do with the commodity structure. This, however, does not seem to be very realistic. Arthur T. Hadley, a former president of Yale, in his book, *Economic Problems of Democracy,* compared business and the professions, and arrived at the conclusion that "the line between them is somewhat ill-defined and I am afraid the tendency in recent years has been to shift in the wrong direction—to commercialize our medicine and our law and our science rather than to professionalize our business." I think Hadley could have included in his list the work of many intellectuals—the writer, the artist, and even the minister and the teacher.

The young teacher who joins a faculty may hope to belong to a community of truth-seekers. Soon, however, he will have a rude awakening and realize what Thorstein Veblen saw a long time ago—that there is a strong affinity between the institution of higher learning and the modern business corporation, where competitive attitudes and the orientation of the conformist and the organization man prevail. He will soon become aware how powerless he is to fight against excessive specialization and compartmentalization of the fields of knowledge. He will have to abandon his efforts to lead his students to an integrated way of thinking, to a genuine search for truth. The pressure toward specialization and its impact on college education have been

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described by Nathan Glazer in his article, "The Wasted Classroom."[9] Glazer's statements show that it is the impact of exchange value—not necessarily in terms of salaries, but in terms of the considerations of a professional career and job security—which induces teachers to make compromises and to forget about some of their values and goals.

> He [the faculty member] may shift schools but scarcely ever will be able to shift departments. His advancement, within his college or from a job in one college to another, will depend not on his virtues as a teacher (who is to judge that?) but on his standing in his discipline....
>
> What this means is that it is much easier for a man to think of himself as a psychologist, a historian, a sociologist, a classicist, a specialist in Elizabethan drama than as someone who is engaged in liberal education. And he is more concerned in *communicating his discipline* to the students than in *educating* them....
>
> There is first of all the competition among the departments, for status, for students, for prestige. This means constant bickering over how many courses a student must be required to take in this or that subject. Central concern of such arguments, unfortunately, is not what the student needs for a good education (though certainly such a motivation does play a role), but the interests of the department....

And Glazer concludes:

> What has happened is that the emphasis on achievement in the traditional departmental disciplines has become nearly irresistible. In recent years it has been reinforced by the enormous research funds which have been made available to the departments by government, industry, and foundations.... For a young scholar to devote time, thought, and energy to developing general-education programs may well involve risk to his career. Thus, the general-education movement is being crushed, and the plague of departmentalization now grows even in the small progressive colleges.[10]

In another trend, which shows how much the teacher's concern about his career and his future affects present-day teaching, many teachers tend to impart primarily factual knowledge. The reason may be that they are reluctant to impose their values on the thinking of their students. Max Weber believed that the professional ethics of a teacher demand that he silence his own values the moment he enters the lecture hall. I have a hunch, however, that there may be still another motive, not necessarily

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a conscious motive, for this focusing on factual knowledge. The teacher may become aware that it is safer not to get involved in discussing the burning issues of our times; from the point of view of job security it may be wiser to resort to a certain neutrality—often conceived of as "objectivity"—and to confine himself to transmitting a type of factual knowledge which at the same time is uninspiring and stifling to the student's curiosity.

3

These illustrations indicate that it is the dominance of exchange value which turns everything and everybody into objects, and which engenders the trends toward *Gesellschaft* and alienation in general.

This view is rejected by most Western social scientists. Consciously or unconsciously, they are committed to the status quo; where I speak of exchange value and *Gesellschaft,* they speak of human nature as something unchangeable and eternal. Many of them think that there is nothing new about alienation, that alienation has always existed and always will. This argument, often used as a kind of tranquilizer pill, has an obvious implication: If alienation has existed in all periods in the same way and to the same degree as today, then we might as well abandon hope that we can do anything about it, or that man will ever be able to come to terms with the problem.

My position is a different one. I realize that previous societies have experienced some degree and some forms of alienation. But this awareness need not make us resigned to accepting alienation as it now exists as though it were our inescapable fate. I believe that there is today a greater challenge than ever before to come to grips with the problem.

Due to the tremendous advance in science and technology, especially in recent decades, man has made great strides toward overcoming alienation as far as it is engendered by the forces of nature. He is no longer at their mercy. By understanding them he has come doser to the realization of the Promethean dream—to shape his own life and to become master of his destiny. Thus, in one way he has greater possibilities than ever before of fulfilling man's age-old yearning for self-realization.[11] Yet, for us, this possibility cannot become reality. The reason is that another type

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of alienation, that engendered by the forces of society, continues unabated and, as I have argued, has even grown stronger.

Thus, a contrast develops between the possibility for self-fulfillment due to the advance of science and technology and the reality of self-frustration which causes man to feel that the human being is reduced to a mere object. To this paradox are added the insecurity and emotional suffering of people who do not feel themselves accepted as persons but only used as the means to an end—as employees at work, as potential voters at election time, as consumers who are enticed by hidden persuaders to make needless purchases which will put them deeper into debt, as soldiers who are sent to fight in wars which they do not understand—even in their family life and in their most personal relationships.

What can be done? My own answer is somewhat pessimistic as far as the immediate future is concerned. We must realize that there is no short-cut in our fight against alienation. Many cures are suggested: to transcend the materialistic spirit of our age, to improve our schools and educational methods, to strengthen neighborhood feeling and grassroots responsibility, to encourage people to join the do-it-yourself movement in order to come into closer contact with tools and materials and thus with life. All these objectives may be worthwhile, and I have no wish to belittle them. But I cannot feel that they are adequate remedies for the illness of alienation.

Two decades ago we heard much about the need to get away from overcrowded cities, from impersonal living within the anonymous mass society. If you want to get hold of yourselves again, we were told, if you don't want to continually surrender to standards of conformity, you will have to live in small, decentralized communities where your children can grow up in a climate which makes for both physical and emotional health. Today many people have abandoned this hope and have become disillusioned with suburban living. Patterns of pseudo-living continue relentlessly in our suburbs and many suburbs have fallen prey to the very forces of alienation which they set forth to conquer. This is what I have in mind when I reiterate Marx's view: *You cannot overcome alienation within a world of alienation.*

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We cannot reduce the forces of alienation unless we are ready to build up new and different socio-economic institutions. This does not mean that we need be blind toward the great historical contribution which capitalism has made in the past, which so severe a critic as Marx was the first not only to recognize but to emphasize. But, as the song asks, "Where have all the flowers gone?" Capitalism can no longer play a positive role today. And a system geared to commodity production and based on competition cannot help man to contend with the forces of alienation.

Some critics will want to ask me, "Where have you been, mister? Has nobody ever told you that the days of laissez-faire capitalism are over?" The danger today, they say, is not too much competition between various companies but too many agreements and combinations among them. I have heard all this. I have heard also about many other changes which have occurred in American capitalism since the era of the New Deal. Yet, the core of our living has remained competitive. In our society, to get ahead of the other fellow is considered an important goal, and advertising slogans are still based on the appeal of outdoing the other person—as, for instance, in the kind of commercial which proclaims, "Lady, if you wear this dress, your friends will *envy* you." The fact that arousing a feeling of envy is considered a positive appeal in advertising is but one symptom that our society promotes *separation* between man and man. If our goal is to overcome alienation by fostering *bonds* between man and man, then we must build up institutions which enable man to identify his ends with those of others, with the direction in which his society is moving. In other words, we must try to reduce the gulf between the realms of the private and the public.

This is an aim hard to reach in any society in the modern world. But I believe that a planned society, a socialist society, has a better chance to approach the objective. I don't want to belittle the difficulties of socialist societies. I am far from looking upon socialism as a panacea, far from the naive and chiliastic hope: Introduce socialism and automatically alienation will disappear. Great dangers lie in the path of any socialist society, dangers which are often due to the development of new power structures

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or to the growth of bureaucracies which could stifle the development of the individual. I see these dangers as clearly as many opponents of socialism do. But I am more interested than they are in the question of whether these difficulties are inherent in the nature of socialism or whether they emanate from historical conditions which can be modified by human action. Whatever the answer to this question may be, I am not saying that a socialist society must inevitably succeed in reducing the forces of alienation. But I do say that a socialist society is the prerequisite for achieving this goal. This is one of the reasons why in my university years I became a socialist, and why, in the United States of the 1960's, I feel even more deeply committed to the ideas of socialism.

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Population Talk

by Sarah Sexton

Eric B. Ross, *The Malthus Factor: Poverty, Politics and Population in Capitalist Development* (London: Zed Books, 1998; distributed in the United States by St. Martin's Press), 256 pp., $25, paperback.

Mention the word "population" almost anywhere in the world and it is women's rather than men's fertility that comes into the spotlight. Or, rather, women's overfertility: "population" usually stands for "overpopulation," and if there are too many people, it must be because too many babies have been born. Of all the development, economic, environmental, or social policies devised by think-tanks, implemented by governments, and funded by multilateral agencies, population policies tend to be the only ones that focus on women from the outset rather than tacking on woman- or gender-oriented amendments later, under pressure from women's movements. The goal of national and international population policies today is usually to reduce the number of children women bear and raise—a goal to be achieved either directly, through increasing rates of (women's) contraceptive use or indirectly, through improved education, employment, and empowerment for women.

Sarah Sexton works with The CornerHouse, a social and environmental justice research and solidarity group based in Britain.

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Many women's groups and movements have been able to take advantage of these policies, especially those expressed in terms of women's rights, in order to gain access to contraception. This is particularly true in contexts in which influential institutional forces, such as those of church or state, limit women's self-determination.

Nonetheless, such access is still predicated on the assumption that there are too many people in the world; that unless some action is taken by external forces, there will be even more "too many people" in the future; and that these too many are causing local, national, and global problems of deforestation, pollution, hunger, urbanization, crime, war, and social instability. Questioning these assumptions is often taken as tantamount to asserting that the number of people in any given locality or on the entire planet can continue to increase indefinitely, unproblematically, even beneficially—tantamount to claiming, for instance, that more people equals more economic productivity.

In population talk, therefore, disagreements almost invariably seem to be about numbers: How many people can the earth support? Is the population growth-rate slowing fast enough? What is the optimum carrying capacity of Rwanda? Or it's about how population compares to "other factors" in environmental degradation and resource depletion. Population policies, meanwhile, whether intended to increase or reduce the numbers in a country, usually target women—treating them as wombs. Trying to participate in the population debate without donning this conceptual straitjacket is next to impossible.

Thus *The Malthus Factor*, a book on poverty and population, is a singular achievement simply because it does *not* mention numbers of people. And given that women tend to be mentioned in population discourse only as instruments to be influenced in order to bring birth numbers down, it is a relief, irony of ironies, that this book barely mentions women at all. By not disputing the population statistics or the various influences on the number of children women raise, *The Malthus Factor* makes a significant contribution toward breaking out of the population framework, paving the way for a wider and potentially more fruitful explora-

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tion of poverty, development, deforestation, pollution, national security, social stability—and of women's self-determination in their lives in general, not just in relation to their fertility.

Eric Ross spends little time arguing the truth or otherwise of the theory (posited as a law of nature two hundred years ago by English clergyman and, more crucially, economist Thomas Malthus) that, because the increase in human numbers will always outstrip the increase in agricultural production, "positive checks" on the numbers of people, such as disease or starvation, are inevitable. Instead, his book concentrates on exploring the various political and economic interests which have found Malthusianism and its subtle contemporary variants useful over the past two centuries. In particular, it examines how explanations of poverty and environmental degradation as "products of human population pressure on resources" have rationalized or obscured "the aims and contradictions of capitalist development."

Malthus' initial aim was not to reduce the numbers of poor people, or the numbers of people living in poverty, in England or Ireland or the other English colonies in the eighteenth century; instead, he aimed to reduce "the material obligation of the rich to mitigate the human misery caused by chronic or periodic unemployment." As Ross points out, Malthus was writing at a time of intense upheaval in England: the country was in the midst of an agricultural revolution, on the verge of an industrial one, and waging war against France. As Malthus refined his theory over thirty years or so, his "central and unrelenting" aim became clearer still: "to justify and affirm the established order of inequality."

By arguing that poverty was the "natural" product of the fertility of the poor (the number of children produced by the rich didn't seem to follow his law), rather than of the social or economic system, Malthus' "law of population" absolved and acquitted the property-owning class of any accountabiliy or responsibility for the poor or for poverty. The solution, therefore, was a matter of individual responsibility, which had nothing to do with wider

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institutional structures and contexts. Indeed, Ross concludes that

> while Malthus is remembered chiefly as the originator of a theoretical perspective which has left us with an unremitting anxiety about 'over-population,' his greatest achievement, in fact, was to devise such an enduring argument for the prevention of social and economic change.

It is this enduring aspect of Malthusian theory that Ross explores in the bulk of his book. Overpopulation was first invoked as an explanation of famine and death in supposedly "resource-poor" Ireland in the eighteenth century, obscuring English colonial underdevelopment and the export of Irish grain and meat to feed England and its other colonies. Years later, overpopulation justified another kind of commercial agriculture, the Green Revolution, and the displacement of yet more peasant farmers. It also came in handy to contain movements demanding land reform. Before, during, and after the Second World War, meanwhile, it legitimized efforts to contain socialist and communist threats to Western capitalist power, first in the Soviet Union and then throughout the world. Today, it explains away conflicts in Africa and "surplus labor" immigration from the third world to the first. It is called up against proposals to cut carbon emissions in the West so as to reduce global warming (cut the numbers of certain groups of people instead, comes the counter-proposal). And it is again being used to justify yet another "advance" in agriculture: genetic engineering. To illustrate and support his arguments, Ross has collected a range of detailed and thoroughly researched contemporaneous writings, reports, and letters.

Time and again, particularly with the inclusion of birth control in its "practical armoury," contends Ross, "the Malthusian vision . . . has proven to be a perspective which, in its compelling simplicity and practical application, could give the cover of legitimacy to Western interests."

Ross maintains that no other explanation of poverty has managed to overwhelm reasoned debate about alternative explanations so consistently as that which cites overpopulation as the root cause of most human ills, backed up by apocalyptic forecasts of starvation (or, more recently, "anarchy"), and says:

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> The fear of pending famine has systematically distracted attention from the fact that it is not the reproductive habits of the poor, but the contradictions and motives of capitalist development . . . that are the principal source of most of the misuse or waste of the world's human and material resources.

The parallels between the uses to which Malthusianism has been put in the past and the uses to which it is put today are extraordinary. The so-called "free market" was argued for in the eighteenth century in much the same terms that are used today. Arguments for the workhouse in the nineteenth century, meanwhile, closely match those used by contemporary welfare-to-work proponents in Britain and the United States. Condemnation of "feckless" women two hundred years ago mirrors the recent suggestion of a British government minister that single (poor) mothers should put their children up for adoption.

Ross draws out some of these comparison on his tour—"Ireland pioneered that pattern that dominates the late twentieth century, when capitalist agriculture, with its diminishing need for human labour, is forcing millions of people to seek a living far from home"—but I'm sure many readers can contribute more from their own knowledge and experience.

The fact that Malthusian arguments against the mitigation of economic or social injustice have endured over two centuries "underscores how little fundamentally has changed between his time and our own," concludes Ross. Its most consistent feature "is its resolute defence of inequality."

But how has Malthusianism managed to be so influential in the past two hundred years? Ross doesn't use the phrase "revolving door" to describe how government ministers become influential corporate players and then leaders of political think-tanks. Instead, he consistently lists the pedigrees and multiple connections of key supporters of Malthusianism—John Smith wrote a book on A, while he was a lecturer at B university, having been a general in C army; his cousin was on the board of X think-tank, used to work for Y company, and went on to work for Z government commission. In this way, he builds up an interconnecting nexus of government, companies, philanthropic organizations, and think-tanks.

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Different parts of the jigsaw fall into place when one learns that the Rockefellers supported not only intellectual theorizing about overpopulation and contraceptive development but also the dissemination of Green Revolution agriculture (which was reliant on chemical fertilizers and pesticides derived from oil extracted by Standard Oil—a Rockefeller company).

Some connections are more disturbing than others. Ross details how Standard Oil worked in close cooperation during the 1930s with various German chemical companies, which were, in turn, actively in alliance with the Nazis. What are now agrochemicals were initially developed for weapons; after the Second World War, new uses for the chemicals had to be found. Within four decades, such companies had become global giants in the field of agrochemicals: "Much of the world's food production could be linked to the activities of companies whose idea of corporate responsibility had been demonstrated at . . . Auschwitz."

Challenging the extent of the impact of human numbers as numbers on the world's resources can counter the hegemony of Malthusian thinking, as can bringing other factors into the population-impact equation (indicting Northern consumption, for instance, or highlighting the fact that agricultural output has outstripped population growth, or invoking power relationships between different groups in society). Despite these challenges and refutations, however, Malthusianism still has immense appeal and a great hold over many people's thinking, including well-intentioned individuals and groups who really believe they are doing what's best for people and the planet.

A catalogue of the links between the various individuals, institutions, interests and movements which have found Malthusianism useful to promote their own particular goals—not just the rich and privileged, who have always regarded overpopulation as shorthand for "the majority," but also eugenicists and environmentalists—begins to explain, at least in part, why Malthusianism has such a foothold.

The Malthus Factor should prove immensely useful to a range of movements wanting to delink their concerns from a population framework—including those involved with women's health.

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Those with grave concerns about antifertility vaccines, for instance, because they believe the contraceptives are being developed within a population framework, may find arguments to support their case—even beyond those documenting how birth control became an instrument of Western foreign policy after the Second World War. As Ross argues, "The proper context . . . for understanding the contemporary circumstances of *any* developing country . . . is that of global political economy, not local reproductive habits."

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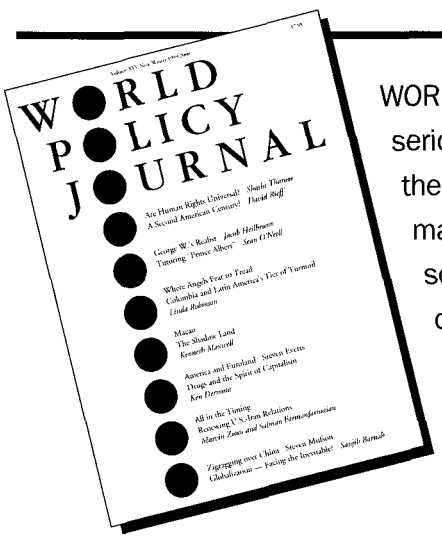

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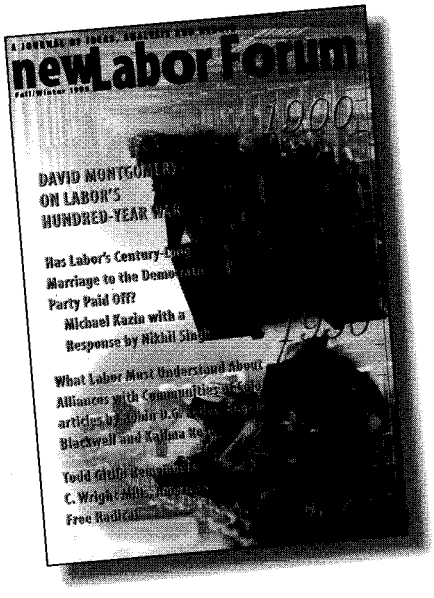

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city in front of the administration building, where students were determined to camp out until their demands were met. On April 10, a contingent of rank-and-file steelworkers from United States Steelworkers of America District 11 in Washington State (currently engaged in a lockout battle with Kaiser Aluminum) came down to offer their support to the students at a rally. On April 12, the university president signed an agreement, making the University of Oregon a member of the WRC. A week and a half later, Phil Knight retaliated—vowing to cut off all future personal donations to the University of Oregon, including, reportedly, thirty million dollars earmarked for expansion of the football stadium. A few days earlier, Knight had expressed his "shock" that the University of Oregon had "inserted itself into the new global economy" and "on the wrong side" by aligning itself with the WRC (*Eugene Register-Guard*, April 26, 2000).

There can be no doubt about the historical significance of this new student movement—a movement dedicated to internationalism and workers' rights. In future issues of *MR*, we plan to carry articles related to this new wave of activism.

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The cover story of the March 31, 2000 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* was devoted to "David Noble's Battle to Defend the 'Sacred Space' of the Classroom," and dealt with his criticism of online education, which began with his article "Digital Diploma Mills." We consider Noble's analysis in this area to be crucial to the understanding of the crisis currently confronting higher education in this country, as a result of the ongoing commodification of universities. We are pleased to be able to state that "Digital Diploma Mills" was published in the February 1998 issue of *Monthly Review.*

***

In April, our longtime friend Annette T. Rubinstein turned ninety. Annette has been a strong supporter of *MR* from the beginning, and a frequent contributor to the magazine since 1968. At the same time, she has played a crucial role on the editorial board of *Science & Society.* She is also the author/editor of two important books published by Monthly Review Press: *Schools Against Children: The Case for Community Control* and *The Great Tradition in English Literature from Shakespeare to Shaw,* about which W.E.B. DuBois said, ". . . I read every word of it, and as I lay it down I want my friends to know why they would better follow my example." MRP also distributes Annette's *American Literature: Root and Flower.* Happy Birthday, Annette!

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—Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff

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During the last few years, student movements opposed to licensing agreements with companies that rely on sweatshop labor to produce shoes and clothing (such as Nike, Reebok, the Gap, and Disney) have emerged on university and college campuses throughout the United States. These student protestors have united during the past year and become an organized nationwide movement, United Students Against Sweatshops, which is demanding that university and college campuses join the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), based in New York. The WRC was set up by the student movement to monitor the conditions under which university-licensed goods are produced. Such monitoring will make it possible for schools to enforce licensee compliance with Codes of Conduct that many universities and colleges have already established in response to student pressure.

The movement, however, has faced strong opposition from university administrations. In the opening months of this year, campuses erupted as students increased the magnitude of their protests. We have personal experience with events in Madison, Wisconsin and Eugene, Oregon that stand as concrete examples of this nationwide struggle.

The antisweatshop movement at the University of Wisconsin at Madison emerged a few years ago, partly in protest against a licensing agreement between Reebok and the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. In February 1999, UW-Madison students occupied the central administration building for ninety-six hours, resulting in the chancellor's agreement to comply with student protestors' demands for disclosure of factory locations, protection of women's rights, and the guarantee of living wages for workers. This agreement was to be binding on any licensee with the university. The administration, however, subsequently went back on these promises and arranged for UW-Madison to join the Fair Labor Association, a corporate-dominated "monitoring" agency that provides ideological cover for sweatshops. Outraged by these actions, students occupied the chancellor's office again. On February 20 of this year, scores of riot police wearing gas masks descended on these peaceful protestors (having pepper-sprayed student demonstrators earlier that week). Fifty-four students were arrested, making this the largest mass-arrest in Madison in over a century. What emerged, however, was a victory for the students, since UW has now joined the WRC.

Student protestors at the University of Oregon in Eugene have been struggling for some time against Nike's domination of the university. Not only does the corporation have an overwhelming share of sports-licensing agreements at UO, but Phil Knight, Nike's CEO, is the principal private donor to the school, having personally given fifty million dollars. Both the library and the law school carry his surname.

Protests at UO have centered on Nike's sweatshops in Asia and Central America. Students occupied the central administration building on April 4, resulting in the arrest of fourteen students over three days, and erected a tent

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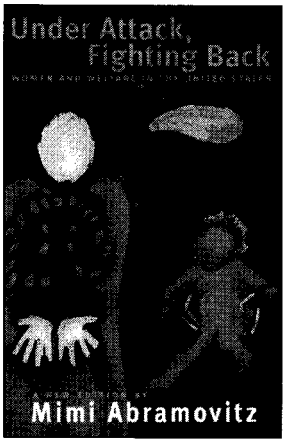
by Mimi Abramovitz



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